

INSIDE STORY OF THE FRENCH MILITARY PLOT AGAINST SILESIA, BY FAMOUS INVESTIGATOR

PLOT TO MAKE POLAND PAWN IS REVEALED

**Briand, Foch, Poincare, and Other Leaders Named
in Revelations by Man Who Has Been Making
Secret Political Investigations for British Gov-
ernment for Twenty-Five Years—Double Deal-
ing at the London Conference to Settle French-
English Dispute.**

Ever since the Versailles Peace Conference Silesia has been a thorn in the side of European settlement. Before the war it was a part of Prussia. Because many Poles were living there Poland claimed it, that is, the part called Upper Silesia. The matter was left to the Silesian people, to vote at a plebiscite whether they preferred to belong to Germany or Poland. But the result was more confusion than ever. A number of towns near Germany voted for Poland and a number near Poland voted for Germany.

A committee of the allies, wherein France, Japan and Great Britain were represented, met in Paris in August and tried to settle the issue. They could not come to any agreement that was satisfactory to all, and so decided to refer the matter to the League of Nations.

Upper Silesia is very rich in coal, iron and zinc, which makes it valuable. It is about the size of Connecticut.

France does not want Germany to have Upper Silesia, or wants her to have as little of it as possible, so that in case of another war Germany's resources in metals will be limited. France is strenuously supporting Poland's claim to the land.

Great Britain opposes the position of France, giving as a reason that this territory "has been a Prussian province longer than Alsace and Lorraine were French," and that to compel the Silesians to join Poland would be "to create another Alsace-Lorraine" and so plant the seeds of another war. Some Englishmen accuse France of "militarism," of wanting to be the boss of Europe, and of desiring to ruin Germany.

Recent history has, of course, told how France and Great Britain have been at loggerheads over the disposition of Silesia to such an extent that several times the two nations were very near a break in their relations.

In the series of articles beginning today, Casimir Pilenas, for a quarter of a century in the employ of the British Intelligence Department, sets forth the results of his investigations of the Silesian problem, in which he is emphatic in stating that the French military party is determined to have the control of Upper Silesia given to Poland. France's interest, he points out, of course, would be in having a dominating influence over Poland.

These revelations are a contribution to current history which gives an insight into one of the most perplexing problems affecting European peace.

By COL. CASIMIR PILENAS.

AFTER a lapse of over a hundred years France is suffering from a recurrence of that terrible disease which threw Europe into a state of chaos and resulted in the downfall of Napoleon Bonaparte; that same disease which but a few short years ago threw not only Europe but the whole of the world into the agonies of war.

The wild lust for conquest is revealing itself once more. Daily the ambition for world power is growing in Paris and with that growth the peril of the peace of the world increases.

When grave fears were entertained of the rupture of the Paris conference we were told that Silesia was the stumbling block. Then the French delegates gave way a little and Silesia sank into the background. But only momentarily. The problem will loom large again yet, for it is merely the bogey which is being used to obscure the vision of the other delegates while Briand, Foch, Poincare, Bourgeois, Berthelot and their associates pave the way for the great coup.

PLOT INVOLVES ALL BALKAN STATES.

I have secured my information in the only manner possible—by being in the employ of opposing parties and I hold irrefutable evidence that Silesia is only one small pawn in the game; that if the present plot is allowed to proceed without interruption for another six months France will not only advocate that the Poles should govern in Silesia, but will demand that Poland be allowed to take possession of Esthonia, Latvia, the Memel district—the whole of the Baltic States and even the Ukraine.

And whatever the Poles secure is already mortgaged. How completely they are under submission to the French I will show you. The organization is almost perfect and the blow, although it may be delayed, will assuredly be struck.

For just twenty-five years I have been engaged in

EXPOSES INTRIGUE



COL. CASIMIR PILENAS, who has retired after twenty-five years' service as an international investigator, and now makes amazing revelations of the Franco-Polish conspiracy to absorb Silesia.

secret service work, but this last job has definitely decided my future course of action. It is my duty now to come out into the open and reveal what I know of this astounding intrigue in the hope that my facts will enable the governments of this and other nations to be prepared, for the world cannot afford a repetition of the horrors of 1914-18.

France imagines no grievance against the small nations. They are being used merely as a means to an end and that end is REVENGE.

REVENGE ON GERMANY.

It is necessary if we are to get to the depths of this situation to go back to October, 1912. At that time I was acting as Director of British Military Intelligence at Vilna and on the morning of the 8th I had a discussion with Major Pargeter, the chief of the British Military Mission in Lithuania and Colonel Ward, the former British consul. We had information that General Zeligowsky's troops were only sixteen miles from Vilna and still advancing.

CONSPIRATORS PLOTTED HIS DEATH.

In view of the fact that Zeligowsky had agreed not to penetrate Lithuania, it was decided that Major Pargeter, together with Captain Pijol, of the French Military Mission and a small staff, should go to the Polish headquarters and ask for an explanation.

Immediately their presence was reported the British officer was put under arrest and detained for eight hours. Captain Pijol was allowed to go unmolested.

When the party returned and we were told that the advance to Vilna was to continue we decided to move our headquarters to Kovno, which we reached the following evening. I had had a hazardous time in Vilna. Threats against my life were an every-day occurrence and the early calm of Kovno seemed to promise an easier future.

But the calm was speedily disturbed on the eleventh by the appearance of one Captain Schoepf. Now just a sight of that man Schoepf was enough to spell trouble. He was one of many former officers in the Lithuanian army who had joined General Bermont-Avaloff, a Baltic baron and leader of an army of rebels, whose object was to seize and sell any property in Latvia, Esthonia and Lithuania on behalf of the Baltic barons.

I suspected Schoepf of being mixed up in some treacherous scheme and in my attempt to discover his intentions I was fortunate in getting a white Russian nobleman who was in my pay admitted to the councils of the Bermont-Avaloff conspirators. After attending the first meeting he came back to report and his information proved that the money I was paying him was the best investment I had ever made. His first words were: "Try and clear out. They're going to kill you tomorrow. If you stop here you can't escape this time. Voronko has organized this lot and you know what Voronko is."

Voronko was the former Minister of White Russian Affairs in Kovno and I had been the cause of his dismissal after discovering that he was using his position

to intrigue with the Bolsheviks on the one hand and the Germans on the other, with the aid of a woman named Wildberg with whom he had been living. He was the man who had issued orders that I was to be shot on sight.

Surely enough, round about midday on the following day I walked out of my office and turned down Laisves Aleja (Avenue of Freedom), a wide boulevard with a path bordered by trees running down the center, on my way to the Hotel Metropole, where I was living temporarily. The hotel stands on one corner, formed by the junction of the avenue and Daukanto Gaive, and on the opposite corner there is a bootblack's stand.

It was there that I spotted Schoepf, apparently having his shoes shined, but before I reached the corner seven of my men who had been warned of the plot against me surrounded the bootblack's pitch. Schoepf could not get away, but he remained quite calm, remarking merely, "Ah! I see you know all about the little trick. All right. I am going away." And he went after a few words of caution.

I received a second visit from an agent of Voronko the following day and his attempt came nearer to success than that of Schoepf. Again I was walking down the avenue on my way to the hotel, but it was in the evening this time. For some distance I was conscious of being followed by a very distinguished looking stranger. He was a man of about forty, sharp featured with a closely cropped moustache, tall, thin and slightly round shouldered. He looked anything but an assassin and might easily have passed for a very learned and able statesman.

FRANCO-POLISH PLOTTERS IN LONDON.

For a time he kept a fairly considerable distance behind me, but as I crossed from the center path to the shadow of the wall he speeded up until he was so near that he could have touched me.

He did, in fact, make a motion as if to tap me on the shoulder, but before he could do so two of my men who had been hiding in the doorway of the hall used by the Bolsheviks as a meeting place sprang out and seized him.

He did not deny their accusations and raised no protest when his loaded revolver was taken away from him.

Why he wanted to speak to me before he shot I don't know—but it is as well for me that he did.

All these happenings were being faithfully chronicled by the hotel servants for my wife's benefit with the result that she worked herself into such a state that it became imperative that we should get out of the country, for a time at least. Accordingly on Sunday, October 17, we left Lithuania for England.

Traveled to England Only To Find Envoy a Traitor

I traveled as a diplomatic courier. The fact that a man is a nobleman is sufficient in such circumstances to brand him a traitor. He numbers among his friends in Lithuania members of the present Government, and what are they but Black Hundreds? Their leader, Krupavichus is the man who instigated the Jewish excesses at Ponevezh.

Patriotic Noble Deposed.

When Rabinowitch finally calmed down I told him that as, I was the man who investigated the circumstances leading up to the Ponevezh excesses, I could confidently label his statement an unqualified lie. "And as for the other twaddle," I asked, "what of the Countess? Is she also a traitor since she is the daughter of Prince Radziwal and consequently a noblewoman?"

"I repeat," thundered Rabinowitch, "nobles are traitors. If the Countess is a noblewoman she is a traitor."

"Isn't this your difficulty, Rabinowitch?" I inquired. "Aren't you anxious to poison opinion against the Count so that you can get him out and one of your friends in his place?"

There was no reply to this, but events speedily bore out the soundness of the suggestion. I made two or three more calls at the Legation after these incidents and on each occasion that I saw Rabinowitch he seized the opportunity of doing his best to discredit the Count and the Countess and also the Lithuanian Charge d'Affaires in Paris, a man named Lubicz-Milosz, who claims to be a Polish Prince.

The immediate result of this campaign was that a meeting of prominent Lithuanians was held in London and it was decided that there was no evidence to justify Rabinowitch's charges. The whole story was communicated to the Count himself, but by this time Thomas Naroushevitch, the Lithuanian delegate to the League of Nations, was in London making his own inquiries. He, too, began to spread accusations against the Count and suggested that he had

Pilenas Has Long Been Famous as Investigator

COL. CASIMIR PILENAS, a British subject, has been engaged in secret political investigations for various governments for a quarter of a century. It was in 1896 that he first figured on the pay roll of the British home office, and since that time he has been in the employ of Scotland Yard, the British naval intelligence department, the British military intelligence (general staff), in addition to having undertaken private investigations in the United States, Britain, France, Germany and the Baltic provinces.

In the past ten months alone he has been employed by the Lithuanians, the Poles and the French to investigate various matters connected with the Near Eastern problem.

Among secret service men Casimir Pilenas holds a reputation for straight dealing; crooks know him for his thoroughness, and some of the biggest compliments he has received in his professional career have been from men who have come off second best in a battle of wits with him.

Von der Goltz, the man who, after being tracked down during the war by Colonel Pilenas, confessed to being a German spy, wrote of his captor: "He is quite 'some' man. I have known him long. What Great Britain will do for him I don't know, but she owes him much."

The appearance of these articles synchronizes with the writer's retirement, and this fact alone can explain his ability to reveal his identity in making these sensational disclosures of the intrigue surrounding Silesia.

formerly worked with the Germans and was the tool of the French.

Ultimately the campaign was successful and Tyszkiewicz was recalled to Kivno. He refused to accept a transfer to the Vatican and his offer to resign was accepted. Today he is living in retirement in Paris, a clever diplomat, an upright man in the prime of life politically poisoned for being a patriot.

Woman Learns Secrets.

One result of the upheaval was that Naroushevitch took charge at the Legation temporarily, and it was he who first commissioned me to go to the meeting places of those who were and still are at the root of many of Europe's troubles.

It was on February 5 of this year that I was ordered to Paris to prosecute inquiries among the advocates of a greater Poland report back to London. On the Sunday (February 6) I went to the Hotel Select in the Place de la Sorbonne for the purpose of calling on Yvonne Pourreau.

Yvonne is a pretty girl—doubtless she finds that an asset. She is rather dark, of medium height, with features which are noticeably regular. And she is shrewd. What that girl knows of the inner workings of political intrigues in Europe will surprise even the intriguers themselves if she ever finds herself in a position to divulge her secrets.

It was to this woman then that I went on the advice of a Lithuanian priest in London to secure information concerning the intentions of the Poles. I explained my mission and it was arranged that she should communicate with me again when she had secured appointments with the people most likely to be of assistance.

In less than a fortnight the call came and I returned to the little hotel in the Place de la Sorbonne on February 18. Yvonne had worked hard. She had seen personally ex-President Poincare, M. De Selves, the man who preceded Poincare as the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, and various diplomats and generals.

From them she secured a general outline of the intentions, not of the Poles but of the French. "For," as she put it to me, French intentions are instructions where the Poles are concerned."

Foch's Hand Revealed.

Her next appointment was at No. 7 Rue du Marche Neuf, Versailles, where she was to meet Marshal Franchet d'Esperey. I saw her immediately after that interview and she assured me that Marshal d'Esperey was already under orders. A few hours earlier he had received specific instructions from Foch to be prepared to take charge of a large military mission in Lithuania for the purpose of giving the Poles any assistance they might require in carrying out the occupation of Lithuania.

"Don't rely solely upon my words," said Mlle. Pourreau. "Come along, now, and talk to Emile Bure at the offices of L'Eclair."

It is necessary here to point out that L'Eclair is M. Briand's paper; that M. Bure, the editor, is a former chief d' cabinet of M. Briand and is still the personal friend and confidant of the Premier. To the offices of L'Eclair we went immediately and without any difficulty we secured admission to the

presence of M. Bure. I was introduced and Mlle. Pourreau, who apparently was on terms of the greatest friendship with the editor, began to talk of the Baltic problem and the instructions to Marshal d'Esperey.

"Yes," said Bure, "the Poles will get a mandate from the French for the occupation of Lithuania and d'Esperey is to control the operations. On what grounds will the mandate be granted do you ask? Why surely the Lithuanians are not fit to govern themselves. The Poles will assist them. The same will probably apply to the Memel district, to the Upper Silesia and the Baltic States generally. It is quite possible that the whole will go to the Poles but it would be too big a proposition for them. In that case we should help them. After all, such an arrangement would be only reasonable."

"Look what the Boche has done to us. Are we not entitled to something?"

There you have the spirit of revenge which breathes through the whole of the French military party.

Who comprise the military party? I will give you those named in my presence by Emile Bure.

Briand Secret Chief.

They are: Leon Bourgeois, the head of the League of Nations but a militarist at heart, ex-president Raymond Poincare, Marshall Foch, Philip Berthelot, the secretary-general to the French Foreign Office, Marshal d'Esperey and several other less important soldiers and diplomats.

M. Briand himself does not come in. It would be too dangerous. That is where Emile Bure is called upon to play his part. He is the liaison officer between what might with justice be called the Annexation Party and the Premier.

How successfully he throws dust in the eyes of those who might retard his plans is shown by the fact that two days after I was with Bure in the office of L'Eclair, M. Briand and M. Berthelot arrived in England for the London Conference, Marshal Foch and Gen. Weygand followed shortly afterwards and a week later all four were present at a party given by Mr. Lloyd George at Chequers.

The outcome of the February conference had been jeopardized by the Silesian problem, but the men who were parties to a plan drawn up in Paris a few days earlier, providing for the Poles to occupy the territory as representatives of the French, conceded point after point until they finally agreed to the plebiscite and undertook to abide by the decision of the people on condition only that the British government place four battalions of troops at the disposal of the Upper Silesian Commission in case the allies were unable to control the voters.

That was the agreement to which the French delegates became parties—and then went back to Paris to perfect their plans for frustrating the intentions of the conference.

Briand's bluff succeeded then. It has succeeded since, and his intentions on February 21, last, are his intentions today.

What he hopes to achieve eventually I will show you.

(The second instalment of Pilenas' absorbing revelations will be published next Sunday.)